


Compliance Assistance



# ***Pesticide Safety Training***

*for Field Worker-  
Employees Working in  
Treated Fields*

EMPLOYER  
RESPONSIBILITIES



California's worker safety regulations specify safe work practices for employees who work in **treated fields (field workers, early-entry field workers)**. This booklet summarizes your responsibilities as an employer to **assure** that you provide the required pesticide safety training to your employees.

This booklet is not intended to replace product label information, the Pesticide Safety Information Series (PSIS) leaflets, or the California Code of Regulations. It is a reference tool that summarizes specific regulatory requirements and responsibilities that you – the employer – must follow. You are encouraged to contact the Agricultural Commissioner's office in the county or counties where you operate for any additional requirements specific to your area.

See **"Definitions You Need to Know"** at the back of this booklet for explanations of highlighted words.

## What You Need To Do

- **Assure** that each employee assigned to work in a treated field has been trained within the last five years. The training must be given BEFORE beginning work in the treated field and must be given in a manner the employee understands.
- **Cover** the following subject areas in a manner the employee can understand, orally from written materials or audio-visually, using non-technical terms:
  - **Importance of routine decontamination** and washing thoroughly after the exposure period.
  - **Restricted entry intervals (REI)** and what posting means, including the California and federal formats for field posting signs.
  - **Where pesticides are encountered**, including treated surfaces in the field, residues on clothing, chemigation and drift.
  - **Routes by which pesticides can enter the body.**
  - **Hazards of pesticides**, including acute effects, chronic and delayed effects, and sensitization effects.
  - **Common signs and symptoms of overexposure.**

- **First aid** including decontamination and eye flushing.
- How to obtain **emergency medical care**.
- Warnings about **taking pesticides or pesticide containers home**.
- **Hazard communication program requirements**.
- **Employee rights**:
  - Right to personally receive information about pesticides to which he or she may be exposed;
  - Right for his or her physician or employee representative to receive information about pesticides to which he or she may be exposed; and
  - Right to be protected against retaliatory action due to the exercise of any of these rights.

## Also...

- **Assure** that **early-entry field workers** receive the following **additional training** indicated below:
  - **Use and care of personal protective equipment** required for early entry into treated fields.
  - **Prevention, recognition, and first aid for heat-related illness**.
  - **Pesticide product labeling requirements**

related to human hazards or precautions.

- **Use a qualified trainer** to conduct the training for field worker employees. The person conducting the training must be qualified as one of the following:
  - A California certified commercial applicator.
  - A California certified private applicator.
  - A person holding a valid County Biologist License in Pesticide Regulation or Investigation and Environmental Monitoring issued by the Department of Food and Agriculture.
  - A farm advisor employed by the University of California Extension Office.
  - A person who has completed an “instructor trainer” program given by one of the following:
    - University of California, Integrated Pest Management Program (after January 1, 1993).
    - Other instructor-training program approved by the director.
  - A California licensed Agricultural Pest Control Advisor.
  - A California Registered Professional Forester.
  - Other trainer qualification approved by the director.

- **Record of training for field worker-employees not required**, *unless* you participate in the “**Pesticide Training Verification Program for Field Worker-Employees**” (see separate booklet for a complete description of this program) and want to issue “blue cards” as proof of training.

## What If You Don't Comply?

The California Department of Pesticide Regulation (DPR) and the County Agricultural Commissioners enforce California pesticide laws and regulations. It is your responsibility to take all reasonable measures to assure that employees handle and use pesticides in accordance with the requirements of law, regulations, and pesticide product labeling requirements.

If you follow the worker safety requirements, you protect your employee's health, the environment, and yourself. If you do not comply, you will violate federal and State law. DPR and the Counties' Agricultural Commissioners have the authority to levy substantial penalties on persons who violate pesticide laws. Penalties range from \$50 for minor violations to \$50,000, and imprisonment for certain violations that have 'created or reasonably could have created a hazard to human health or the

environment.' Also, persons who hold a license or certificate issued by DPR and who are found in violation can have their license or certificate suspended or revoked.

## Definitions You Need To Know

**Treated Field** – means a field that has been treated with a pesticide or had a restricted entry interval in effect within the last 30 days (It does not include areas inadvertently contaminated by drift or overspray). Also, it includes:

- Associated roads, paths, ditches, borders, and headlands, if the pesticide was also directed to those areas.

**Assure** – means to take all reasonable measures so that the behavior, activity, or event in question occurs. When the behavior, activity, or event in question involves or concerns an employee, reasonable measures by an employer include determining that the employee has the knowledge to comply; providing the means to comply; supervising the work activity; and having and enforcing a written workplace disciplinary action policy covering the employer's requirements, as well as other measures required by pesticide law or regulation.

**Field Worker** – means any person who, for any kind of compensation, performs cultural activities in a field. It does not include performing tasks as a crop advisor, including field checking or scouting, making observations of the well being of the plants, or taking samples, nor does it include local, state, or federal officials performing inspection, sampling, or other similar duties.

**Early-Entry Field Worker** – means any person who enters into a treated field or other area after the pesticide application is complete, but before the restricted entry interval or other restrictions on entry for that pesticide have expired.

If you have questions or need more information, please contact your local County Agricultural Commissioner's office.

A complete set of the worker safety regulations is available online from the California Department of Pesticide Regulation's web site at: **[www.cdpr.ca.gov](http://www.cdpr.ca.gov)**



**California Department  
of Pesticide Regulation**

A Department of the California  
Environmental Protection Agency